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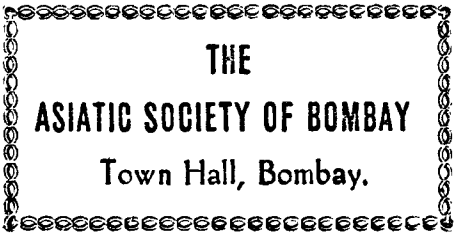

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THE ARTIST'S LIFE

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BY

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AUTHOR OF

"SOME EMOTIONS AND A MORAL"

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BALZAC, TURNER AND BRAHMS

THE ARTIST'S LIFE*

My first intention was to have called this address "The Literary Life." I wanted to give a picture of the spiritual and active discipline of those engaged in the career of literature. On consideration the term seemed too narrow for my purpose, and I felt that by saying "The Artist's Life," I should meet your kind interest and my subject with greater clearness. My text will be the following story:—

A peasant once consulted a nerve

*A lecture delivered before the Philosophical Institution, Edinburgh, the Literary Society at Glasgow, the Ruskin Society at Birmingham.

specialist about his son. "They tell me," said he, "that my son has Art. What is an Artist?" "An artist," said the physician, "is a person who thinks more than there is to think, feels more than there is to feel, and sees more than there is to see." The peasant clapped his hands. "We were afraid," said he, "that he was only a bad boy; I see the poor little soul is really quite mad. If we put him in a cage, under a curtain, people will pay us to look at him." "If you keep him in a cage," said the doctor, "his great gifts will perish. You must give him over to the wisdom of Divine Providence." "Oh, no," said the peasant, firmly, "because, in that case, he will leave his happy home and go to Paris!"

Now, I believe that this story illustrates the attitude of many kind and prudent

people with regard to the mysterious organism known as the artistic temperament. How can we know that a child is an artist? How, in that painful event, is he to be educated? Is he mad, or bad, or both? Is he to be encouraged or discouraged? Shall we keep him at home or let him seek new worlds? Will he not go instinctively rather toward evil and disorder that toward goodness and common sense? In the search for truth, will he not go deep into the mud and concentrate all his attention on humiliating realities in order to describe them later with persistent emphasis? It is easy to understand the alarm of any father when his son or his daughter betrays an overwhelming inclination for poetry, painting, music or literature. Why, the very love affairs—apart from the money affairs—of any

artistic being are the wonder and often the scandal of orderly society. They are generally in debt, and always in love: frequently in debt to the wrong persons, and eternally in love with the unsuitable. Turner, as a youth, broke his spirit over an unhappy attachment: he took his mended, more mature heart through curious adventures, but the early accident is regarded as the first cause of his ultimate eccentricities. Schumann's brain, beyond doubt, was affected by the strain, anxieties and suspense of a long, uncertain engagement. Balzac corresponded with Madame de Hanska for sixteen years, and died four months after his marriage. Brahms never married at all. "It is as hard to marry," said he, "as it is to write an opera. I shall attempt neither."

Yet the debts, the love, the marriages

—things which, after all, really touch most young men—are small considerations in comparison with the enormous strain of following life and the arts at the same time. It is, however, the strain involved in every profession, trade or pursuit. Creative work, so called, may be the most exhaustive labour possible, and those who possess productive genius, as a rule, though not invariably, die young, but eminent men in every department have not won honour either by brooding alone or avoiding the ordinary responsibilities of friendship, of home ties, of business, of social pleasures and social duties. "Man goeth forth to his work and to his labour until the evening." He does not choose his labour, he is called to it, and the call, whether it be to the

Church, the House of Commons, the counting-house, the Stock Exchange, the open field, engineering, the shop, the library, the studio, or the concert-room, the call is so imperative, so irresistible, that no opposition, no difficulty, no discouragement, no failure, no illness, no physical exhaustion is able to deaden its effects.

We live at a time when most men and women have progressive, analytical minds. Humanity and the world do not explain themselves naturally or easily. We cannot know life by any diligent consideration of permanent laws and fashions that pass away. Mere rules will not satisfy the thoughtful: there is an insatiable curiosity about the why and the wherefore. When we hear that this is so, we next wonder whether it

need be so, especially when the rule seems to press unfairly upon us, or upon those we love. In other words, there is an immense impatience of the unnecessary. We all wish to reduce the pain, confusion, disappointments and tyrannies of life to the lowest possible minimum. And so, daily, practical experience offers more instruction upon formidable enigmas than any meditation or science can ever give. That is why we often say that an energetic life is the happiest. There is no time to think. I prefer to say that there is no time to *exaggerate* our thoughts and emotions.

Now, artists, as a class, are seldom happy. They have intense sensitiveness, and, in comparison with the individuals with whom they be obliged to spend

their days, they must always seem to be morbid, fantastic, unreasonable. They do this very thing of which I have been speaking: they exaggerate. They think more than there is to think, feel more than there is to feel, see more than there is to see. How many great men, I wonder, have been called impossible by their relatives? Few things present such painful examples of human blundering as the early education and training of great men. The boyish genius does not merely possess within himself abnormal and excessive capacities for suffering, but he is actually made to exercise that capacity to its fullest power before he has learnt self-restraint, before he can have gained any sort of wisdom, before he has had time to observe the trials of other

people. Childhood is the period of egoism: from the first years till one-and-twenty—and perhaps longer—we are all extraordinarily interested in our own history, our own ideas, and our own desires, and when these are rudely disturbed, interfered with or harshly considered, the shock is hard to bear.

Robert Schumann and Balzac, for instance, were tormented by their well-meaning and affectionate parents into the belief that it was their duty to study for the law. Schumann's correspondence in his youth on the subject of his uncongenial drill makes a poignant chapter in the chronicle of human despair. Balzac's mother, who adored him, managed to torture and irritate her son to the end of his days: when she is seventy-two, he complains, "She

writes to me, a man of fifty, as though I were a child of five." During his last and fatal illness, her tactless, alarming letters hastened the end: her jealousy of, and bitterness toward, the woman he loved almost prevented the marriage which he had been planning for sixteen years. It speaks much for the nobility of both Schumann and Balzac that they bore this tyrannical foolishness with heroic fortitude, nor did they doubt the great, if selfish, love behind the wrong judgment. Lord Byron's hatred of his mother is well known: Turner never spoke of his at all. When Lady Holland sent Charles Fox to Harrow, she apologised to the head-master for her son's stupidity. Now the really dull boy and the impossible man are always self-satisfied. A born dunce knows that he

is a dunce. He is allowed to play while others are driven to work or to consume their hearts in wounded pride. When the poet spoke of ignorance being bliss, he meant it! But Balzac was sent home from college as a boy who was really mentally deficient. In later life he explained his condition as that of a congestion of ideas. He had so much in his head that his entire life was not long enough in which to express it.

On the other hand, of course, we must own that not everyone that is hard to live with is of necessity an artist. How is a man to know that he has an artistic temperament? He may not be an artist merely because he is unhappy at home, or because he is easily wounded by doubt, or because he is constitutionally more delicate than his relatives. Certain

things are common to all mankind, and the tendency, in various degrees, to down-heartedness, love-sickness, bad temper, and admiration for the moon does not involve, *a priori*, the creative impulse. Moreover, the emotions of men and women of genius may be compared with the spontaneity of the fountains at Versailles. It is spontaneity curiously disciplined and subject to symmetrical control.

It comes to this, that while we may all possess sincerity, and we must all possess human nature, it is for the artist to be so much the master of his nerves, his heart, his soul, and his mind, that he can translate his impressions exactly, without over-statement, confusion or false sentiment. Every work of art is the outcome

of its creator's personality. It is easy to announce this truth, but it is not so easy to explain it. Perhaps I can bring it home to all of you by the very common experience we must all have had of re-visiting a once familiar spot after some change in our own lives. The place must be the same, but our view of it will depend entirely upon our mood at the moment. We may like it more, we may not like it so much, we may wish we had kept our remembrance as it was, yet, perhaps, the very day we are turning away from it in disappointment, to someone else it may represent the brightest land-mark of their youth. This is in the case of mere scenes: as a man is within, so he judges what is without—but take a character. We all know what is meant by a Dickens char-

acter, or a Thackeray character. They have a certain mould. We say of such and such a person that they might have stepped out of one of Walter Scott's incomparable romances, or one of Miss Austen's novels. We know a Gainsborough portrait at sight: we do not need a catalogue to recognise the Sargent of the year at the Royal Academy. Musicians can often tell at a first hearing the compositions of Wagner, Beethoven, Mozart or Brahms. The highest art is admitted to be creative. Balzac's people, at the time he wrote, were not considered, by everybody, life-like. They were called monsters when they were bad, and artificial or insipid when they were good. What is meant by being life-like? We ought to say, I think, that what a strong man's brain can conceive of as possible,

ought to be accepted as possible. This same complaint of unreality was urged against Dickens. He mentioned in one of his letters that the original Mr Pecksniff and Mrs Nickleby sat in front of him on chairs, and asked him whether such people really existed! Balzac writes,—"Cousin Bette will be a terrible story, for the principal character is a blend of my mother, your aunt, and our friend Madame Valmore." "Romance," he says elsewhere, "may be a splendid lie, but it must be true in its details." Many adroit writers are too apt to give the literary temperament to each of their characters, and many learned critics demand a critical attitude in all those of whom they read. This is wrong, surely. People of action—and stories usually concern people of action—act very much

more by instinct than by reflection. Prolonged thought, and the habit of examining every motive by the light of some personal obsession, or some acquired system of analysis, is peculiar to writers, and there can be no greater error than to give these professional mental processes to the dashing heroes and the headstrong, emotional heroines of fiction. The only unanswerable test which we can apply to all creations of fancy is the test of time. The greater the imaginative gift the less commonplace are its conceptions. Emerson has well said in one of his Essays that farce and comic opera are always better acted than tragedy because all actors can understand the trivial and ordinary, but only the most distinguished can give the accent and expression of sublime drama.

We know that there are, broadly, three

schools of writing. There is the romance of observation, and the romance of imagination, and the study of documents. Now we get, frequently, very powerful and instructive productions based on documents, second-hand evidence and the like, but it is really lazy and fruitless work compared with the compositions of those who live and study at the same time. Balzac, in the preface to the final edition of his collected works, writes: "Chance is the greatest of all romancers; in order to be productive, one has only to watch the events and people of each day. French society is the historian: I am only the secretary." The real point, therefore, of all I may say in the course of this lecture will be in defence of an artist working in the normal conditions and under the sane restrictions of ordinary life.

In educating the artistic temperament, it must be given strength and then it must be given liberty. Not *license*—not *more* liberty than we give to a banker, a member of Parliament, a judge or a millionaire, but *as much.* We are too ready to provide a cage for our fine intellects.

If we hear of an artist with an unhappy home, and various sentimental entanglements, we say, "How shocking these geniuses are!" The same stories told of a stockbroker meet with the genial criticism, "Ah, he's a man of the world!" Virtue, moreover, has its follies as well as dissipation and discontent: the best can be unwise, the best can make mistakes, the best betray their humanity, the best are not, at every point, irreproachable: that is why the best are so charm-

ing—their faults are our delight and our solace, and if we want to find creatures more unhappy and more misunderstood than the poets, we need only consider the lives of the Saints. The Christian is exhorted gladly to suffer labours, sorrows, trials, vexations, anxieties, necessities, sicknesses, injuries, detractions, rebukes, humiliations, confusions, corrections and contempt! These things lead toward virtue: they also lead toward art.

Balzac was born in 1799. His father was what would correspond nowadays to a King's Counsel; his mother was the daughter of a Director of the Hospitals of Paris. As I have already said, he was sent back from school at the age of fourteen, ill-used, punished and disgraced, as a boy who was mentally deficient. His

parents bowed, as wise citizens, under the supposed affliction. They were not unkind to the misunderstood lad; he regained his health; he was made to take long walks; he became the inseparable companion of his younger sister. When he offered an intelligent observation, his mother would exclaim: "Ah, you little know what a good thing you said then!" She implied it was a case of the fool speaking truth. In the course of time, however, he went to a lawyer's office, but his interest in legislature was wholly that of a critic. He brings a great deal of it into his novels; many of his famous characters belong to the legal profession, but he refused to follow it himself. He was, therefore, sent away from his comfortable home to a wretched lodging in Paris, through the mistaken policy of his mother,

who hoped that hardship, as she called it, would bring him to his senses. He was given a bed, a table and a few chairs: he had an allowance which was altogether insufficient for his wants, and his parents must have been satisfied at the account of his privations and the misery of his mind. But, to their astonishment, he still preferred his attic in solitude to his home life among daily misunderstandings. He remained there for eighteen months, and succeeded in finishing a tragedy which filled his family and advisers with gloom. He was so much reduced in health that they decided, to his regret, it was cheaper to keep him at home, and he was called back to endure taunts there for about five years. During this period he wrote ten novels, in forty volumes, which were published under pseudonyms, because he

regarded them as mere attempts at his art. Although he succeeded in getting these productions published, they were not profitable. No one, with the exception of his sister and a devoted woman, believed in him. Tormented by his family, who refused to allow him seventy-five pounds a year until he could make a better living, he went into the printing business with a young friend. Here again he was continually jeered at, as a person of artistic tastes who ventured to meddle in practical matters. He went through a great many disagreeable experiences; he displayed in all of them discernment, resource and shrewdness, the vast intelligence which was inseparable from all his undertakings, but, as his foresight was not supported by his relations, he had to sell the business after twelve years, at the moment of har-

vest, to his partner, who made a fortune out of the foundry alone. It was the debt involved by these affairs which haunted Balzac to the end of his life. He made, eventually, very large sums of money, but the severe handicap of this speculation, which proved so excellent for other people, was the chief burden of his entire career.

"I go on with my toil," he says in one of his letters, "God alone knows how, because God alone knows why."

He followed from the beginning a rigorous and abnormal method of work. He wrote sometimes for twenty-four hours at a stretch. It was his practice to go to bed at six o'clock in the evening and begin his labours at midnight, continuing them for sixteen hours or longer, maintaining this average for six weeks or two

months or more, then he would plunge again into society and apparently forget that there was such a thing as literature in the world. Long periods of intense application were followed by shorter periods of relaxation. He made frequent visits to the provinces and yearly trips abroad. He travelled a great deal; his friends often lost all trace of him. He bought a little house, which was the scene of much generous, if eccentric, hospitality, and it was from there that he dated many of his letters which were written really in Russia, Germany and elsewhere. This, of course, was at the height of his fame. As a struggling youth he wrote, under great discouragement, to his sister, that his two sole and immense desires were to be celebrated and to be loved. He speaks, too, of his "infernal

patience," a patience which sustained him under crushing disappointments and the most curious want of faith in his power on the part of his nearest connections. When one of his first productions was sent to a learned acquaintance of his father's, it was returned with the comment—"Well, your son writes a good hand." Another Professor declared that whatever Balzac might do in the future it would not be in the way of literature. It was hardly surprising that he was often heard to say that it was his friends and not his enemies who had given him the most trouble. But, as pain was unavoidable, and inasmuch as he had his entire future to carve, he owned that he preferred the thrusts of a sword to the pricks of a pin. We cannot be surprised to have him declare that his best inspira-

tions always came after his hours of extreme agony. Once he wrote in irony to an accomplished amateur: "You are very fortunate to be able to follow Art for Art's sake! There are several men in me—first, there is the financier, then the artist, and then the man of feeling." He was utterly wretched in each character, indeed, it is fatiguing to read of his fatigue. As a financier he never ceased to complain of his debts, his burdens, the sums he made and the greater sums he owed. He carried this mania to such an extreme degree that some of his associates declared that these serious liabilities existed in his imagination only. They may not have been so heavy as he seemed to think, but it is certain that he

was no sooner in a position to show independence than he had to provide a pension for his mother, that he helped his brother-in-law, his sisters and their children, that he gave with the right hand and with the left, in season and out of season, that he never forgot a kindness, that he repaid the smallest service with most costly and beautiful presents, that he had himself the taste for luxurious surroundings. His system of work made it necessary for him to move in the highest as well as in the humblest society; his interests were too wide and manifold to be kept in one groove or sustained in any one environment; the world was his inheritance, and when he met the powerful he regarded them as his cousins and

not his patrons, his comrades, not his masters. A Prime Minister's income would have been insufficient for his needs; he had no such income, he had nothing approaching such an income, and it is painful to read of his own mother dunning for money at the time of his marriage and reminding him that there is ever a heavy bill attached to domestic felicity.

But, if he magnified his private anxieties, and I hope so, as an artist he was perfectly sane. Just in his estimate of others, he was wholly able to measure the value of his own work. He came in for the usual amount of praise and blame which is the common and healthy lot of all men and women engaged in public life, but he never seems to have been dismayed, in any way, by

adverse or unintelligent criticism. In some of his less popular romances, he brings in a great deal of scientific matter, which, at his own time, was considered absurd. Recent discoveries in medical science have proved him right—very much as Goethe's researches in the same direction have been so valuable to professional botanists and others. When Balzac's sister complained that his more learned productions were not esteemed, he replied:—"They will be understood some day."

It was his habit to write three or four books at a time. This method, which has been and is followed by all great painters, is beyond question the right one. It is the one sure safeguard against veiled autobiography, which is the fatal danger to those

who concentrate for too long a period on any one group of characters and any one particular set of scenes. Balzac's novels are, therefore, well balanced. They are always impersonal, always just, and, in order to describe life, one must show, not merely a knowledge of men and the spirit of criticism, but a strong sense of justice. A sense of justice is, perhaps, the most important of all, because our whole attitude towards ourselves, each other and the world depends wholly on this instinct for what is fair. And not for what is fair according to our own ideal scale of things as they ought to be, but for what is fair, seeing that things are as they are, admitting freely, for instance, that fire burns, that pain hurts, that happiness

is worth striving for. I know many admirable people who can be just enough if you will only admit that there is neither pain nor sorrow. Sometimes they are of a melancholy cast: then, you need only say that everyone is wretched and the world is a mockery: they can be tolerent arguing from that basis. But Balzac never allowed his private emotions to disturb his view of life. If he saw his own reflection through tears, he brushed them away when he surveyed mankind.

"I have a horror," he writes to his sister, "of betraying my own feelings in literature," and again, in another letter, when he complains that he is too much absorbed in his art—(she was the kind of woman who first tormented him

because he did not work, and was jealous afterwards because it absorbed the greater part of his time)—he says: "Do not mistake the selfishness of labour for selfishness in me. Why add to my burdens by this constant suspicion of my heart?" In a less rhetorical confidence to a less exacting correspondent, he confesses—"I wrote one book with my feet in mustard and the other with my head in opium." It would be impossible to discover in either composition any evidence of these two influences. He sacrificed his health, his pleasures, the time he might have spent in recreation, the time he ought to have spent in sleep—everything, in fact, which makes existence possible, one would say—to this passion for writing.

In spite, however, of his industry he

was a man who lived, during his leisure, a normal life. His novels show an intimate knowledge of the details of the household. He had a number of close friends, and many of his strongest works were composed in various home circles, with all the turmoil of domestic cares around him, and any amount of that talk which is called "small"—which is, in fact, the talk which makes up the tragedies, the happiness, the pulse of life.

When he retired to his lodgings, he kept up a close correspondence with a number of individuals who confided in him all they could tell of themselves and their surroundings. His sympathy never failed, and it was because he was sympathetic rather than inquisitive that he heard so much. He was never the callous gossip-monger, anxious for facts and impatient of

explanations. He knew too well that explanation is the buried treasure of life: he could never be given too many explanations.

It was not until the age of thirty that he signed a book with his own name, and his success from that time was never for a moment in doubt. His talent was acknowledged. He was not known then as he is known now, after a century of consideration: he was too wise a man to have expected the enthusiasm which can never fall to a great artist's lot during his own life-time, but success he had, and fame he had. It is also reassuring to know that three of his greatest works were executed during the last years of his life; it was his physical strength—not his art—that failed.

It would seem to me inexcusable to

refer you to the terrible struggles of the great novelist if it were not for the note of peace in his last year when he writes: "All happiness is made of courage and work. I have seen many hard days, yet with energy and, above all, my illusions, I have always gained the better of despair." To an old friend, he wrote, three days after his marriage, when death already held his heart: "I have married the one woman I have ever loved, whom I love more than ever, and whom I shall love till I die. This union is, I believe, the recompense God held in reserve for my many adversities, my years of work, my difficulties endured and conquered. My childhood was unhappy, my youth was embittered, but I have had a brilliant summer and a sweet autumn." His health had gone: his sight was going: every move-

ment was painful: his private worries were by no means at an end, yet he says: "I have even paid too little for my joy: twenty-five years of toil and struggle are nothing for an affection so splendid, so radiant, so complete. My sorrows, my anxieties are all explained."

Love was the greatest influence in his work. He defined it as "the bread of the soul." It began with the affection for his sister, then there was the woman friend, who for twelve years devoted two hours daily to him, either in seeing him or writing to him. It is well known that she helped him financially when his family refused to come to the rescue. Other attachments were formed after her death. Why not? We find him writing to Madame de Hanska with whom he corresponded for sixteen years: "You are

the first, the last, the continual thought of my life." No one can read his letters to that lady and doubt the sincerity of his devotion and the extraordinary power she exercised over his mind. At the height of his fame, and about five years before the end—which occurred when he was fifty-one—he writes to her: "I don't need the world, I long for home, my own place, all the rest is a vain dream; it has been the secret aim of my steps, my actions, my ideas, my efforts, my works." In other words, he was always looking forward to a life of repose and means and a happy marriage with this ideal. He lived to see the dream fulfilled, but his health was shattered by the prodigious struggle which he had made in order to achieve these ambitions.

"Immense success and great affection were the joy of his life," wrote his sister,

in the introduction to his correspondence; "there were also supreme desolations—nothing is mediocre in the souls of those who are endowed with exquisite sensibilities and acute intelligence."

Brahms was born when Balzac was just becoming known, in 1833. The composer was the son of a musician, and it was not considered singular or undignified that he should have a passion for music. He led, therefore, the simple home life of a burgess with his own people, his piano and his books, a fit prelude to the later period when, his reputation established, he lived for thirty years in the same quiet house in the same quiet street. At the age of fourteen, he made his first appearance as a pianist, but although he met with applause, he resumed a rigorous apprenticeship —

practising, studying, composing, we are told, for five years. Then he played again, as an accompanist only, but Joachim, by chance, happened to be among the audience, and the distinguished violinist, with his invariable kindness, recognised the boy's talent. "He will have a great artistic career," he said; "he is the most considerable musician of his age that I have ever met."

The friendship with Joachim led to a friendship with Liszt, but the second turning-point in his career was the introduction to Robert Schumann, to whom he presented himself all but penniless—(he had been unfortunate in a concert engagement)—and covered with dust after a walk of many miles—(he could not afford his railway fare). It may be that if Schumann himself had not suffered

such anguish, such misgivings, such hardship, in his own early life, he would not have been able to sympathise so warmly with the beginner. He loved the magic of his music, he felt the beauty of his playing, he recognised the sane and virile genius; his enthusiasm took a practical form, and he himself sent Brahms' compositions to the cautious company of great publishers. He called him the "young eagle," and foretold his future celebrity. This friendship only lasted for some five months, for Schumann's own career came to its tragic end at that time. But Brahms was already counted among the rising men, and he was offered an official appointment, which he accepted. During the four years which followed the holding of this post he remained quiet. It was supposed that his had been one of

those not uncommon cases where precocious ability was followed by premature decline, but in 1859 he suddenly presented his Pianoforte Concerto in D Minor. A well-known critic tells us that its reception for the moment was most unfavourable. The audience listened in pure bewilderment, and the leading newspaper of the day described its orchestral part as a series of lacerating discords. Sustained by his remembrance of Schumann's advice that success is not a precarious life in another's breath, but a thing which comes by the will of God, Brahms took the composition to Hamburg, his native town, where it met with full appreciation. A second and more popular work was given later without any controversy, and then he resigned his official post, feeling, no doubt, that his best

hours were being wasted in routine and drudgery.

He returned home, but there he found, perhaps, too much mental repose. It was, perhaps, enervating. There is not stimulus when every effort is met not half-way, but all the way. One may well ask how ought one to treat the artistic temperament. At anyrate, Brahms left this delightful and harmonious circle to join one of Schumann's pupils in a little town near Zurich. Here he gave lessons, played in public, and brought out some noble compositions. At the age of thirty he grew once more dissatisfied with his surroundings: he saw himself being drawn into a coterie: he felt a craving for some imperial capital — the voices from the distant great city rang through his dream —so he went to Vienna, there, of course,

to encounter the usual difficulties of professional life. No man had fewer enemies, but his music did not appeal to every hearer, and the first judgments were seriously adverse. Some people found his music deficient in feeling. It was too intellectual, too academic, too cold, they said. On the other hand, it had immense vigour and variety, and, although I wish to put aside all personal tastes and prejudices, I may say that to me Brahms seems the Robert Browning among musicians. He was writing at a time when over-statement in every branch of art was becoming the fashion: hysterical, morbid styles of expression were considered more artistic than the purer, graver manner of the classics. I am inclined to think that if his own history, as the general public understood it, had

possessed more alarming elements his work would at once have assumed a certain scandalous value. It is too often supposed that because a life is outwardly simple and undisturbed, the person living it must be somewhat phlegmatic, frigid, and inaccessible to the most stirring possibilities of experience. Someone has said, in opposition to this superficial theorising, that more is learnt in one hour of self-mastery than in twenty years of self-indulgence. In any event, Brahms died so recently—1897—that it is not possible for us to know his intimate life as we know the lives of Balzac and Turner. In his method of work he resembled Balzac: years of vigorous activity were followed by periods of almost entire repose. His songs and his music—songs which once heard are unforgettable, and

music which might almost be called a new utterance in its originality and strength and romantic passion—tell all that we need to know, and all that he wished us to know, of his soul.

Turner was the son of a hairdresser: his mother was a woman of ungovernable temper who died insane. His father's shop window, which was full of powder puffs, curling tongs, and dummies in cauliflower wigs, faced a studio which belonged to a society of artists, and the boy, no doubt, would often look from the shop door at the artistic and theatrical young men who frequented the opposite house. At five years of age he went with his father to a rich customer's mansion. The small child was struck with a figure of a rampant lion engraved on a silver salver. He came home and,

to the delight of his parents, drew this animal from memory, and the wig-maker, with the sure instinct of a skilled craftsman, exclaimed: "It is all settled, William is going to be a painter." The boy, however, was allowed to play among the vegetable baskets in Covent Garden until he was ten, and then he was sent to a day school in Brentford. There he distinguished himself by fighting the school bully, who sneered at his father the barber. Reason and art may be the gifts of God, but so are the emotions, and it is reassuring to know that a dreamy lad with a feeling for sunsets could also, under provocation, punch heads! Without going into all the details of his life, which are deeply interesting, I must concern myself only with the main outline.

In course of time he was apprenticed to an architect, but while he could paint blue sky and grass tufts on his master's designs, he was unable to manage the elementary laws of geometrical drawing. He, too, was taken home as a failure. "He is no use," said the master, "he will never do anything. Make him a tinker." He was given, nevertheless, a second trial, and he was a second time sent home. His father, a man of firm will, then paid £200, a large sum in those days, to place the unpromising boy with an architectural draughtsman. Here he did better, and began to earn that abstract quantity which we call a living. At twenty-one he became a drawing master, and at twenty-five, so rapid was his advancement, he became an Associate of the Royal Academy.

But between these two steps there was a love affair. He was engaged to a young girl at the time of his first setting out for a home tour in Wales or Yorkshire. He was then twenty-one. The marriage was to take place on his return. He worked incessantly: he wrote constantly for two years, and although he received no replies, his faith remained firm, and his ambition, based rather on the wish to prove his love than the desire to demonstrate his own superb gifts, only grew in intensity. He arrived, after his wanderings, one week before the girl's wedding took place with another man. It seems that her step-mother had intercepted all his letters, she herself had lost all hope, and, at last, piqued, humiliated and overborne by advice, she had accepted an old admirer.

This would have been a blow to the hardest man. To Turner it meant, at the time, the mockery of his work, the end of his belief in the truth, the constancy, the affection of good women. He left her in bitter grief. He called down curses on the marriage, declaring that he would never marry himself. He kept his own vow, and the curses, one is grieved to read, took effect. That early disappointment altered his entire nature. He became suspicious, he acquired what Ruskin called "faithlessness." "And yet in ten years," Ruskin continues, "I have never heard Turner say one depreciating word of living man or of a man's work. I have never seen him look an unkind or blameful look."

The great hour in his career was the publication in 1845, when Turner himself

was past sixty, of Mr Ruskin's first volume of *Modern Painters*. This fact is too well known to pursue at any length.

His great friend in middle life was Chantry, the sculptor. Chantry was always allowed to make jokes about the pictures. Turner would chuckle for days when Chantry pretended to warm his hands at the famous orange chrome skies. "I see," said Chantry once, "that you are painting an advertisement for the Sun Fire Insurance!" Humour of this crude kind did not wound the disillusioned and reserved man. But with regard to other criticism, Ruskin has told us that Turner was acutely sensitive to censure. "Owing to his natural kindness, he felt it for himself or for others, not as criticism, but as cruelty. He knew that however little his

power could be seen. he had, at least, done as much as ought to have saved him from wanton insult; and the attacks upon him in his later years were to him not merely contemptible in their ignorance, but amazing in their ingratitude." These words may sound strong to us nowadays, but it seems that in *Punch* and in some other comic periodicals a good deal of fun was made at the expense of the old painter. In reading over these skits I do not feel that the least malice was intended; they might jar on our present idea of good taste—such things would not be written now about a man of Turner's age and reputation. Thackeray, who was among the scoffers, lived to regret very bitterly his sarcasm at the great artist's expense. Turner differed both from

Balzac and from Br hms in caring at all about the ordinary published estimate of his work. Probably, he was more timid than either of the great men I have mentioned. After all, his sympathies were with inanimate beauty, and the storm and stress and strife of human beings were alien to his temperament.

What I particularly wish to dwell on, however, is Turner's method of work. It was precisely that of Balzac. His plan was to absorb whatever he saw quietly, and then, when the impulse seized him, work out the result of his observation and his own marvellous gifts of imagination into the pictures which are now the wonder of Europe. He would walk from twenty to twenty-five miles a day, watch the sky, the road-sides, the hedges and

fields. He was never heard to rhapsodise about scenery. He made rapid sketches and finished them later from memory. He wrote his pictures first. I was shown one of his sketches by a friend the other day, and I was told a story in connection with it. It seems that a great lover of his pictures invited him to his country house to paint a favourite view. Turner came down, made himself agreeable at meals and fished all day. At the end of a week or two, his host thought he might, without seeming a Shylock, ask a timid question about the proposed work of art. "Oh," said Turner, "the picture's all right. You can come to my room if you like and see it." His comforted host followed him, feeling, perhaps, a certain remorse for doubting his friend's integrity,

and entered the room. "There it is," said Turner, handing him a sheet of paper with these words written upon it: "Trees here, river there, clouds." I need not dwell on the despair, the mortification, the hopelessness which afflicted his admirer, but the picture was finished in Turner's own way and in his own time. It is now considered one of his loveliest productions.

Turner's pictures were inventions; they were seldom topographically correct. He would reduce a whole day's journey into one sketch. They followed Balzac's definition of romance—splendid lies, but true in the details. His was creative art in the highest meaning of the phrase.

It is very characteristic of him that no one enjoyed his exquisite pictures

so much as he did himself. He hated to part with them, and, whenever one was sold, he felt that he had suffered an actual bereavement. In his later years his miserly habits and his sharpness in making bargains were seriously misunderstood. His house in Queen Anne Street is said to have resembled a ruin in a desert; notes for hundreds, cheques for thousands were offered again and again for the pictures and engravings which he kept there. The offers were invariably refused. He died, attended by strangers, in the little house at Chelsea, which looked on to the river and has a railed-in roof from which he could observe sky effects. He had engaged the cottage under an assumed name, and in the neighbourhood, he was

regarded as an old Admiral in reduced circumstances. When he died, at the age of seventy-six, much shattered by a laborious career, he left effects which were sworn under £170,000—a fortune accumulated, not for his own pleasure, or out of avarice, but for the families of struggling artists. It had been his secret aim to collect a legacy for his poor associates in art.

What we find in the education of artists then is this, that Balzac, the son of a lawyer, received too little sympathy; Brahms, the son of a musician, received perhaps too much; and Turner, who was despised by his teacher, the architect, was always believed in by his father, the hairdresser. It is true that the old man never praised him much for his

beautiful work, but he had an immense respect for him when he found he could earn even a few shillings.

The explanation of these different policies may be found in the fact that to the successful barrister in 1830 the literary calling seemed a second-rate affair; to the older Brahms, music merely carried on the family tradition; to the wig-maker the profession of art seemed a distinct social advance. And so we always find that, when men of artistic talent were born in what are called humble circumstances, they received far greater encouragement than if they belonged to the well-to-do middle class. In professional and official circles, artists of every kind were then considered prodigal, restless, immoral, slothful in business,

discreditable generally. I say this because none of us care to think that there was any deliberate unkindness in the up-bringing of the great men to whom I have referred. They would not be so treated in these days. The spirit of the Renaissance, in this respect, is once more prevailing, and it is always bound to revive and prevail, because Apollo and the Muses are as immortal as the Law and the Prophets. Dante, a sound Christian, said that long ago. On the other hand, we must admit that very young persons with refined tastes come to fancy that to lose patience with the business of this life is to become spiritually minded. They also come to fancy that in order to excel in any of the arts it is right to

seek out wild companions, to visit strange haunts, to scoff at the respectable, to despise simple things, to defy etiquette. I say etiquette, because few honestly wish, in their hearts, to defy the higher rules which govern life. Many young, charming people like to be thought rather wicked and dangerous and desperate. The less they know of real sin and real evil, the more anxious are they to get a reputation for dark and turbulent passions. This form of vanity—well known to all persons who have to deal with matters of the heart—is no doubt due to the dulness wrongly associated with vulgar ideas of virtue and the respectable.

Student life, on the whole, for those who make any mark is pleasant because

the tasks are l, the comrades are kind, the i never flags. But it means hard work, and it demands an independent spirit. If tragic experiences come, they must not be deliberately sought: cold-blooded curiosity, premeditated imprudence, stimulated feeling teach nothing except bitterness, and give nothing except artificiality. One true love will bestow a deeper insight into the world than years of gallantry. One unexpected, untold sorrow is a surer discipline than any number of elaborate, acknowledged and paraded griefs. "It is not genius that is so rare," said Goethe, "but sincerity." He was not referring to mere heartiness and goodwill, mere candour and straightforwardness; he meant the sincerity which

enables a man to meet his own private feelings squarely, without fear and without hope—without the fear of finding them too small or without the hope of making them magnificent. This gift is the first and greatest of all. There are artists who cannot give expression to their natures: they cannot draw, or compose, or write, but they have the artist's soul. A brilliant poet once said of his old boatman: "If that man had my technique, he would be with Virgil, and if I had his rich temperament, I could hope to stand by Homer."

One point is especially worthy of remark in the careers of the three men I have chosen to speak about. Balzac was helped and believed in by devoted women, whereas Brahms and Turner were supported wholly by men. It was Joachim,

Liszt, and Sc[illegible] who fought the battles of you[illegible]s. It was John Ruskin who made Turner's fame ring through the entire world. It would be interesting to trace in the works of the three the particular attributes which made them appeal so strongly in one case to feminine, in the other cases to masculine, faith. A ready reply would be that women like novels, whereas men, as a rule, do not. But Balzac's novels are more read by men than by women. His style is uncompromising; he is never a sentimentalist; his portraits of women are not altogether flattering. It is true that he wrote a great deal about love, but he also wrote as much, and even more, about finance, politics, vice, metaphysic and religion. Perhaps his fascination was due to his power of describing, in

letters, and no doubt in conversation, his own feelings. Instinct in choosing a confidant and the genius for self-revelation are, perhaps, as rare as the most supreme imaginative faculties. I gather, too, that Balzac was dogmatic and domineering; a man of that kind will take correction and advice from women when he would quarrel with men. Turner and Brahms, on the other hand, were less assertive, more persuasive in their ways; this made them popular with their own sex, perhaps less attractive to the opposite one, which is notoriously most enchanting and enchanted in subduing the unmanageable.

I ask myself now whether, if a man were master of his own fate, he would be, by choice, an artist? It is a question few could answer quickly. Perhaps, some

might say tha ac answered the question uncon in the piercing words:—"It seems as though what is mere commonplace in the lives of all other men will ever be a dream of romance for me. I shall never know ordinary happiness." I prefer to take his later statement: — "Misfortune, which has true friends, is, perhaps, far better than blessings which are envied."

Art has friends. We have seen that, when everything failed and went wrong, the least fortunate artist had faithful, tender friends, some known, more unknown. Browning, to whom I have compared Brahms, wrote—

"I have a friend across the sea, ...
It all grew out of the books I write,
They find such favour in his sight,

That he slaughters you with savage looks
Because you don't admire my books."

There is the artist's life — unending labour, supreme desolation, infinite love.

DANTE AND GOYA

DANTE AND GOYA

One of the charms in addressing the Dante Society rests in the fact that it is not necessary to introduce him, or to apologise for his existence, or to assure you that he is well worth reading—if one can snatch a few moments from the masterpieces which are daily published and daily praised—as Dante is not. But this is not a Goya Society, and so I shall feel no diffidence in attempting to tell you something of the personality, and the art, of that very great Spanish painter. And, if you will bear with me, I will try to justify the step I have taken in placing his name with Dante's as a supreme master

of portraiture. You may wish to know first what I mean by portraiture. Well, broadly, I may describe it as the presentment of character, either by colour and lines, or by words — that is to say, there are portraits in frames, and portraits in books, and portraits in stage plays. The originals of many portraits are well known; others may be guessed; others, again, may be what are called creations of the artist's own imagination. Nevertheless, they are *all* portraits, and they are all intended to call up to our mind, or to our remembrance, real men and real women. A portrait, therefore, must be judged by many tests. The critic himself must have, above all things, experience and insight, and a thorough familiarity with the technique of the actual art under consideration. The "I-like-it," or "I-don't-like-it"

method of approaching other men's work may provide readers with amusing occasional articles, but they are not criticism, nor can they ever carry the weight of criticism. We all know that Sainte-Beuve, in France, and Matthew Arnold, in England—to mention two critics with whom other critics have differed, but whose rare gifts have never been questioned—would not write of any work unless they would give the best which they themselves possessed to the task. There is no reason in the world why the critic should always be right. There is equally no reason why he should always be wrong, but that he should be careful and highly-trained are qualifications he may not lack.

Goya was born in the middle of the eighteenth century, very nearly five

hundred years after Dante. He was the son of a small farmer, and while he was not brought up in poverty, his circumstances were humble. Dante's family—as you all know—was distinguished, rich and important, and, whereas the Florentine first displayed his genius in writing love poems, the Spaniard first attracted attention to his ability by drawing a pig on a wall. This drawing was noticed by a monk, who undertook the boy's education, and it is pleasing to be able to add that he lived to see the triumphs of his *protégé*. But I will not mislead you about the facts of Goya's education; he was wild, he ran about the fields and threw himself with ardour into all the games and pursuits of Spain. If he had not been a genius there was every outward indication that he was a ne'er-do-well.

Yet, while he appeared to be wasting his time and his energy, he was gaining an intimate knowledge of his countrymen and of life as it is lived, he had also that quality which is common to genius of a certain type—he could atone for long periods of dissipation by application of a really prodigious kind. For instance, he taught himself French long before he went to France, and, when he worked, the quickness of his brain could repair the indolence and neglect of years. If he was a wild player, he was a frantic worker, and if he was the central figure of all the fights and all the feasts, he excelled, easily, all his fellow-students in the studio of the old painter under whom he first mastered his craft. At the age of nineteen he went to Madrid and we hear of him displaying his talent for music by

wandering through the streets of Madrid at night with a guitar, singing irresistible songs to girls on balconies. And, as often happens, the guitar-playing led to further troubles; he had to fly from Madrid terrified by an order of arrest from the Inquisition. In order to get to Rome he made his way to the centre of Spain — earning his journey money by assisting at bull fights. As one result of his experience in the arena, we have an astonishing series of sketches dealing with bull-fighting, which, in their way, are unsurpassed in power, accuracy and horror. He reached Rome, where he found friends in two other great Spaniards already famous—Rivera and Velasquez. Goya, strangely enough, does not seem to have been influenced by the Italian school of art. He was not a man who owed

much to other painters or to their schools. He was not a man to found a school, and just as it would be impossible to imitate *him*, *he* found it impossible to imitate others. Dante was academic. He took Virgil for his model, he surpassed him, but his mind was ever faithful to classical traditions; Goya, on the other hand, was a philosopher first and an artist afterwards. He learned what he could from every source, but he had neither the technique nor the soul of a born poet. Art for art's sake would have seemed to him absurd, and, indeed, in his time, the question of art for art's sake had not arisen as we understand it now. The Revolution in France and the Inquisition in Spain had produced a type of mind to which such vague impressions as the True and Beautiful, and so forth, would have

held neither meaning nor attraction. The truth as Goya saw it about him, so far from being beautiful, was appalling, and, just as Dante—revolted by the iniquities he felt in the political life of his own day—wrote the *Inferno*, Goya sketched life as he saw it, with all the fury and passion of a nature which no influence was ever able to soften. At Rome, therefore, he was untouched by the romance and the relics of the Renaissance, and the old masters. He met the French painter David, and from him he heard of the revolutionary and liberal ideas which appealed strongly to his temperament.

In 1780 Goya returned to Madrid and took up his abode there, after an absence of fifteen years, under the protection of Charles III.—he became a Court painter. This appointment, which has always

proved disastrous except to the highest order of intelligence, could not alter the inherent qualities of his mind, and, perhaps because he was a satirist and preserved his independent attitude, he became even more successful as a man than as an artist. He had so much power, so much malignity, his genius was so fertile and his qualities were so brilliant, that, while he made people tremble at the bitterness of his epigrams, the epigrams were nevertheless remembered. Men sought his society, and women of high rank gave his wife much trouble by paying him attention and compliments which she considered uncalled for. The young Duchess of Alba fell so violently in love with Goya that she broke with all her Court associations in order to assert a relationship which was more picturesque

than respectable. She was even exiled by the Queen Marie Louise; Goya accompanied her into her retreat, and, what is a marvellous testimony to his powers, he brought her back with him and made her peace with the indignant Royal Family. He seems to have possessed—what is called in these days—a temperament. He believed in nothing, he doubted everybody, he had no reverence, and, I should say, very little sympathy; but, with it all, he was much more than a wit. If he were only a satirist, a wit and a libertine, I could not have placed his name, even for this one evening, beside Dante's. It is not for us to say whether he was capable of feeling deeply—that was his own secret, and it died with him—but we can never doubt that he *saw* deeply, and, whether he disguised his vision in mordant

irony or in brutal exaggerations, or in crude statements, or in fantasies—which seemed sometimes to border on madness —the *truth* is there, and there is his great link with Dante. He knew men and women, and it has been well said of him that "he was not *a* Spaniard, he was *the* Spaniard." He was intolerant, fanatical, chivalrous, unequal and, from the English point of view, inconsistent. An unjust man himself, the spectacle of injustice enraged him; a sensitive man himself—as all satirists are—he could apply the red-hot iron to any wound, whether it was his own or his neighbour's. And yet, with it all, he had, we are told, much personal grace and charm. This grace, at the time he was a favourite of the Queen Marie Louise, took artistic form in some decorative work very much

in the manner of Watteau and Lancret. There are a series of decorative works in the gallery at Madrid which are wholly delightful. They are so full of movement, so bright, so sunny, so delicate—it is difficult to realise that the hand which drew and coloured these delicious pictures could have given us also that ghastly series known as "The Disasters of War." In a former lecture here I referred to the terrible changes worked by trouble in the mind of Botticelli, and the difference between his early works and his later ones. There is a still great difference between those pleasing, never artificial compositions of Goya, and the revolting sketches he has left which are also drawn, unmistakably, from facts under his own eyes. Indeed one of his most famous sketches has for its title this saying: "I

Have Seen Them." It represents a piteous group of men and women at the point of a dozen bayonets. I wish the time allowed me to dwell on the many romantic incidents of Goya's career. He died at the advanced age of eighty-five. He knew extremes of poverty and of affluence. He was the Court favourite under three reigns—the reign of Charles III. and Charles IV., he saw the abdication of the latter, and he painted the portrait of his patron's successor—Joseph, the brother of the Emperor Napoleon. A man who had lived through such crises, and had been such a close observer of them, had indeed material at his hand for satire. In the celebrated series known as "Caprices," there is not a type of evil, or malice, or weakness of humanity which is not hissed and derided

and held up to derision and contempt by Goya. The most flippant study of these works must make the least thoughtful feel that it is almost better for the happiness of the individual not to know too much about the hidden machinery behind those historical events which are described with bald simplicity in the ordinary text-books. Goya would not tell pretty lies and he did not see pretty truths. He never modified his view, and as he took a cynical view of humanity he displayed an absolute indifference in following the successful party always. As he held no official rank and no responsibility, he enjoyed all the privileges and escaped all the penalties inseparable from high rank or responsible professions. He attached himself without difficulty to persons of every class, and he placed his artistic skill as much at the

service of the usurper of the throne of the Bourbons as he had to the Bourbons themselves. His great aim seems to have been to know, somehow, all that there was to know about humanity. For the rest, he had no scruple. He attempted to describe, in a series of most extraordinary works, history, religion, portraiture and national morals. He had not Dante's religious feeling, and certainly not the inspiration which the great Italian found in that marvellous impulse given by a purely ideal first love. Goya said of himself that he had three masters in his life, Nature, Velasquez and Rembrandt. In Nature he seemed to find, for the most part, ugliness, screams, exasperations, cruelty and warfare. As an eminent French critic has said of him: "He can make you shudder but he cannot make

you weep; he can interest you, but he cannot reach your heart." There is something almost revolting in his very ability to be able to sketch — whether from memory or on the scene—some of his terrible impressions. He did not paint *con amore*, he was never in love with his subject. Even in his famous portraits of the Duchess of Alba there is a cruelty in the unsparing cleverness with which he has presented a being who, we feel somehow, is fascinating on rather a mean scale. Just as Dante lived under the inspiration of a very noble love, Goya worked under the inspiration of a very fashionable one. Beatrice was a lady of noble family and the Duchess of Alba was a lady of noble family, but whereas one was a noble great lady, the other was a noble small lady. They were both considered beautiful and

they both died young, but whereas one must have been a woman of singularly tender and profound nature, the other was evidently frivolous, vain, restless and dissatisfied, a true daughter of the eighteenth century, brought up under the influence of Rousseau and Voltaire. And now I have come to the point I wish to bring forward and dwell upon. The genius of Goya was perfectly appropriate to the times in which he lived; he expressed them, and he expressed them with such power that in Spain to-day one still recognises, constantly, Goya faces, Goya attitudes —the world, in fact, which he represented — with amazing brilliancy and quickness — in his oil paintings and his water-colour sketches. I think everyone will agree with me when I say that portraiture—whether in epic, or

in drama, or in prose, or in verse, or on canvas—is a way of seeing. When we go to a gallery of old or modern masters and we have any acquaintance with art, we do not require to be told by whom the portraits have been painted. We know a Rembrandt and a Velasquez and a Titian, just as we recognise a Whistler, a Frank Holl or a Lavery of the present day. In literature we know the difference between a Shakespeare, a Thackeray, and a Dickens character—a George Eliot character and a George Meredith character. They are all true to the truths of psychology but each master has his own way of seeing and conveying his impressions. Now in the State Gallery of Madrid one may see Goya's portrait of the family of Charles

IV. He owed much to that family. They indulged him in every way; they humoured him, they endured all his moods; they permitted him—in a Court still famous for its rigid etiquette—astonishing freedoms. Well, one may imagine many artistic treatments of that family; some of them might have been more flattering to the human race; some might have been more decorative, from the point of view of those who are admirers of the Italian School; but Goya's treatment of the Spanish Royal Family, while it may be what sentimentalists may describe as heartless, is absolutely sincere. Sincerity is, I think, an essential quality in portraiture, and to accuse any painter or literary artist of taking too personal a view, or putting the mark of his

own coinage on his own characters, is inadmissible criticism. If one were to follow the new advice given to artists of every kind by some of the newer school of critics, we should have the nose painted by one distinguished gentleman who was a nose specialist, and the ears by some other distinguished gentleman who made a study of ears, and the mouth by another distinguished gentlemen who made a special study of the upper lip, and we should get a result after the style of the atrocious domestic property known in America as a *Crazy Quilt*. It is a thing made of patches, subscribed by every person who has a cutting to spare. The Crazy Quilt is, in fact, a monster; the impersonal work of art is a monster also. Where there is no individuality

there is no force—where there is no force there is no truth.

Now, if we consider the history of Goya's times, we must admit that no truthful man or woman could call it splendid. It was too violent to be squalid; the lamentation, bloodshed and woe of that period would seem almost incredible to those who live in England to-day; the immorality, the irreligion, the selfishness, the cruelty and the power permitted to those who had either fortune or audacity or rank or all three, cannot be described by us at this distance; but they were immortally described by Goya.

When Ferdinand VII. was restored to the Spanish throne he allowed Goya to paint his portrait. Goya had been disloyal; he was still full of

spite, defiant, impious and reckless. Ferdinand said to him: "You have deserved exile, and you deserve to be hanged, but you are such a great artist that we forget all the rest!"

The Bourbons made mistakes and they were not all good rulers, but they were always aristocrats. Many of them were weak, many were foolish, many were wicked; they never condescended, however, to vulgar resentment or malice. They did not resent Goya's satire; they admired its fearlessness; they recognised its truth. Ferdinand, who knew all that Goya knew of the politics, the society and the tendencies of the period, must have felt that—at a time when all the noblest instincts of humanity were denied and laughed at—it was unjust to look for heroic or even disinterested men. The

note of the age was the note of unsparing, pitiless, remorseless egoism. The battle was to the strong ; the victory, too, was to the big battalions. The soul was ignored and the will of man was opposed absolutely to the will of the unacknowledged God.

"You are a great artist," said the King, "and we forget all the rest." This was not the triumph of personal charm or magnetism—it was the triumph of a man who, with all his faults, could not be flattered by any amount of success, or money, or popularity, into telling lies or acting them. Here he resembled Dante. Here, too, he resembled Voltaire. Here, too, he resembled every man who ever made any mark on his own or later generations. Let him be mistaken, let him be prejudiced, let him see too much joy, or too much gloom, or too much

sorrow, or too little hope, or too little security, so long as he doesn't lie. Had Goya lived in England to-day he would certainly not have shown us women being butchered in the streets, men being dreadfully tortured, or prisoners groaning in chains. The horror is not that he saw them but that there were such sights to be seen. The final comment on his labours may be found in the one calm and consoling phrase he ever published. It is written under a sketch which represents four women sleeping, shut up in a dark attic: "Do not wake them; sleep is often the one good to the sorrowful." The man who wrote that was one who had paid the full price for his knowledge. He must have gone down into the depths and earned the right to speak of suffering in his own terms.

Goya's terms were not Dante's terms, though Dante lashed his own age with the keenest invective ever uttered in literature. Goya's terms were not the terms of Titian, or of Gainsborough, or of Rembrandt, or of Velasquez, or of Shakespeare, or of Goethe, or of Balzac, or of Disraeli, or of Thackeray, or of George Meredith. But he, as they, expresses the moods and the spirit of his own generation; he, wiser than many men of genius, never allowed himself to be tied down to any one set. The whole world was his country, and while he knew Courts, he also knew farmyards, and while he could paint Queens, he could also paint drudges. This is why I call him a supreme master of portraiture—he has not given us a few acquaintances, he has given us a whole people; he has not

given us a class—he has given us civilised Europe in the eighteenth century. The gift may not be comforting; some of us may yearn for a few touches of false sentiment,—a little balderdash, in fact. Balderdash, however, has not vitality. If Goya had given us balderdash we should never have heard of him. And he still lives—not because he was witty, or clever, or wild, or dashing, or agreeable, or was loved by a duchess, but because he was truthful. He painted the truth.

DANTE AND BOTTICELLI

DANTE AND BOTTICELLI.*

I HAVE a great fear, and, you may well think, a greater audacity in venturing to address this distinguished Society, but I was once told by a scholar of the highest eminence, "You can write or talk about anything you please at any time, and if you want a title, call it—'A few remarks on Dante,' and it will be all right. He is bound to come in!" With this warning, which I offer most respectfully to your kindness, I will

* A Lecture delivered before the Ruskin Society of Birmingham, November 6, 1901. The Dante Society, London.

come at once to the beginning of my little address.

Dante and Botticelli are not names which are commonly associated. Both men were born in fortunate days and lived to see evil ones; one died actually and the other practically in exile. Botticelli lived 126 years after the poet's death. He painted, in many opinions, the most pathetic, highly idealised Madonnas in the world; but, he also painted "The Birth of Venus," which is not a religious subject—from an Anglo-Saxon point of view. Another picture, considered his masterpiece, is the "Primavera," a love poem in paint, which, apart from its rare beauty, has a certain historical association with the marriage of "La Belle Simonetta." The history is simple enough—one of

young lovers, an early marriage, and the death shortly after of the bride.

Putting aside its unparalleled value as a work of pure decoration, in colour, in composition, in actual technique, there is over and above all these—feeling, which one can describe only as a combination of music and dancing and joy and something else which, without being melancholy or depressing, is unmistakably sorrow, but sorrow exalted to such a point that it becomes instead of a heaviness an inspiration—a promise and not a disappointment.

Before going further, I must remind you that at the time of the Masters we call great there were no exhibitions. The artists, the architect and the craftsman worked together, and pictures were painted as part of some scheme of decora-

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tion. They were to stand in some certain place. They were to produce some studied effect of light or colour. They were to commemorate some special event or to embody some particular idea, which could be properly associated with the niche it filled and the roof above it. A distinguished artist of my acquaintance has very graphically compared our modern Academy to the Albert Hall filled with eight hundred orchestras, each playing a different composition by a different composer simultaneously. It is quite true that our enjoyment of the Old Masters is also undertaken on precisely the same lines. Churches have been despoiled, monasteries, palaces, villas have been ransacked and their treasures accumulated together in a heterogeneous mass; it is said for their

safety, but it is chiefly, I think, for the convenience of the tourist.

To see such a picture, for instance, as the "Primavera" in one of the darkest rooms in Florence, surrounded by altar pieces representing certain episodes in the New Testament, is disadvantageous enough to the works but a serious injustice to the student. A work of perfect art, after all, can take care of itself, but the student, groping for knowledge and seeking to know the best things in the best possible way, and desiring above all that gift of discerning at once the distinction between the supreme and the admirable and the meritorious and the bad, can only be fatigued and tormented by comparing things which were never meant to be compared, which cannot be compared

any more than we should compare a forest of pines with the sea on a June night.

The power to enjoy simple pleasures —a solitary walk at sunset in some country lane smelling of clover and hedge flowers, with peeps, perhaps, of the sea in the distance, a vineyard, an apple orchard or some humble farm— was far more striking in Botticelli than in Dante. The artist who painted "La Belle Simonetta" had, originally, the seriousness which we find in children —the quality of accepting all that is gay, exhilarating and beautiful entirely as a matter of course. No great painter, with the possible exceptions of Rubens, Teniers, Watteau and Boucher, was ever especially cheerful as we understand the term. No poet of the first

rank was ever what is commonly known as bright. Between a morbid pessimism, however, and levity there is certainly a mean, and that is the mean illustrated in the works of Botticelli and Dante. How could any person who felt, who saw, who heard, who reflected, maintain a smiling, unclouded contentment? It is not possible. Hope and Beauty are always possible, fortunately, and the two elements are everywhere present in the works of a true genius—no matter how persecuted, misunderstood or unhappy. They become tragic, as Shakespeare became tragic, as, presently, we shall see Botticelli become tragic, and as Dante, from the commencement, was invariably. But it is a sign of debility in any reader or observer if they mistake any tragic development for what we are

so fond of calling at the present time too depressing for words. Those who clamour for a cheerful art do not know what the word art means. The great thing is to be just, and, so long as the work is kept just and the critic is healthy, sad endings and a right appreciation of the inexorable justice in animate and inanimate nature can cast no gloom.

The trouble nowadays is that the so-called edifying artists exaggerate the theory of punishment and the so-called immoral writers exaggerate the wickedness of the sinner, and thus, between the two exaggerations, both founded on insincerity of the worst kind, we find the well-balanced person abhorring art honestly from the depths of his upright soul. His common sense is revolted. In a good many minds there is still a kind

of prejudice against Botticelli himself, who has been associated most improperly with a disagreeable type of invertebrate æstheticism. The "Botticelli lid" has passed into the comic verse of the day as the synonym for all that is affected, meretricious and silly.

Botticelli, toward the end of his life, sacrificed, according to several critics, much valuable time in the execution of some illustrations of *The Divine Comedy* of Dante. It was not until the close of the fifteenth century that printed copies of Dante were in circulation. But printed books, curiously enough, were despised by wealthy collectors of that time, and, therefore, the writing and illuminating of manuscripts was regarded as one of the arts. This was how, in the first instance, Botticelli came to paint and illuminate an

edition of Dante on parchment for Lorenzo de Piero de' Medici. They consist of drawings in silver point finished with the pen in black and brown ink. I do not intend to deal critically with the illustrations. They may be studied and admired in a volume of reproductions by Mr Lippmann, published by Lawrence & Bullen. Many of the designs are of extreme beauty, others are interesting and strange, but all of them are of invaluable importance to the student of Renaissance art. Dante, we know, had been in battle and must have seen many fearful sights, acts of cruelty and the like. The striking fact is that Botticelli, who had, apparently, little in common with Dante except his pathos, is not backward in depicting these horrors.

I should like you to follow me in my

effort to show why two men so different in genius, and living at different periods in the history of Florence, should have arrived at precisely the same point of view with regard to the problems raised by the Catholic Faith. The subject covers so much ground that it would be impossible to dwell at length on any part of it. My object is to do little more than suggest a few thoughts and not to expound any new theory.

Dante was the son of rich parents of good family. At the time of his birth, the enjoyment of riches was not occupying the whole attention of the Florentines. Practical affairs were the chief interest, and the young Dante received the finest education possible of his day. He studied law and the classical authors, but he loved music and drawing also, and he was

taught both. He distinguished himself in military service and fought, we hear, well. He displayed such spirit in the expedition that it is said he was appointed Ambassador on several occasions to the various Courts and Republics of Italy. At the age of thirty-five, he was one of the chief magistrates of Florence. His occupation of this post, however, led to his political difficulties, into which I need not enter. Much later on he went on an Embassy to the Pope and also on an Embassy to the Venetians. It may be said that his own contemporaries must have felt that a very uncommon man was among them. His friend, Giotto, the artist, may have held the same opinion of him that he did of Giotto, which he expressed in a famous verse, to the effect that Cimabue had held the

field, but Giotto was now the cry. A hint that fashionable reputations changed from year to year. No man ever seemed an immortal to the majority around him. Genius is seldom ingratiating, and it can never be familiar. I do not wish to be accused of wandering, but at this point I might quote a little utterance of a well-known and popular academician in referring to the work of an unpopular but brilliant colleague. "When I paint a a picture," said the fashionable artist, "any fool can see that it is an uncommonly pretty little thing, but, when my friend So-and-So turns out a canvas, people are absolutely terrified, they don't know what it means. The difference between us is that I have a small talent which I have worked for all it is worth, whereas So-and-So is a man of genius."

Now, this was not only charming on the part of the artist, but absolutely true.

If Dante's precise rank was not remotely guessed at by his contemporaries, his party paid him the highest honour in their power in choosing him as their representative in the transaction of national negotiation. They were quite willing to have him represent the City of Florence. He was great enough for that—immortal or not. They were content to stand behind his wings. This, too, when he was a young man.

In the case of Dante, therefore, we have the scholar, the judge, the soldier and the ambassador. We hear of his lecturing in Paris on theology: he must have distinguished himself, it is certain, in any walk of life. Dante, in fact, by the versatility of his genius, anticipated

the Renaissance as we understand it. No artist or poet of the time of Lorenzo the Magnificent knew more of Pagan literature than Dante, or so much, probably, of public and social life. He was altogether in advance of his own time, and the real influence of his mind was not felt until it encountered the spirits of men so little resembling each other as Boccaccio, Michael Angelo, Savonarola and Botticelli. It was not that he had to offer either a religion of joy, as it is called, or a religion of suffering, but a religion of the heart. He had lived and loved, and hoped and despaired, and failed, apparently, in some undertaking—succeeded magnificently in others. He was human before all things, and those who may have found his scholarship repulsive, heard an irresistible appeal in his

emotions. Boccaccio, for instance, who has never been called sublime, and who expressed himself in ironical, contemptuous satires of the utmost courtesy, loved and studied Dante all his life, and did more than all the pious of his city to make him known—by lectures, by actually copying in his own handwriting—a beautiful one—the manuscript of Dante. Few greater tributes have been paid the humanity of a religious poet than in this patient, laborious act of homage on the part of an author whose profligate writings have never ceased to be a jest when critics have to decide between comparative improprieties.

Botticelli, of whose life we know very little, was the son of a tanner. He was brought up and apprenticed to a goldsmith: an art which he employed later

with exquisite skill in his paintings. He became a pupil of the Carmelite friar, Filippo Lippi, and his gifts were soon recognised throughout Florence. He was the friend of all the famous men of his time, including Politian the poet, and Lorenzo the Magnificent. Let us imagine him working out his delicate scarcely human fancies, painting daisies and field flowers with all the love that he gives to his embroideries in the mantle of the Virgin, and with the feeling which his friend, the worldly poet Politian, had for violets. (Some of us may know the lovely elegy, "In Violas.") Let us imagine Botticelli painting "Simonetta," while the fountains cooled the spring air, and the musicians played on stringed instruments, and the nightingales sang, when he could see the lemon trees and

the beautiful blue mountains in the distance, the long stretch of valley beneath the terraces of a Medici villa. A very different life this from that of a supreme magistrate in a political crisis. In fact, Petrarch tells a story of Dante at Court, not inappropriate at this point. A prince asked him why it was that most people found a quite stupid person far more agreeable than a man of the highest learning and accomplishments. Dante replied that he saw nothing extraordinary in the fact, because friendship depended on the resemblance between character. This was ready, but it was not the way to become popular in gardens where the fountains played. We cannot imagine Botticelli indulging in repartee of this dangerous description. But the history of all artists is the history of surprises.

If Botticelli was the friend of Politian, who lectured on Pagan literature, the Art of Love, and the Idylls of Theocritus, he was also the friend of Savonarola, who has been called the founder of Puritanism. Why then, one might ask, did Botticelli wait for the execution of tragic subjects till his last years? Why, as an ingenious lady once said to me, was he so especially upset by Savonarola? Well, a good many people were upset by Savonarola. I have no intention of discussing the great Dominican at this moment, but he was, unquestionably, right in condemning much that he condemned, and many of his prophecies were rushing towards their fulfilment even while he perished on the gibbet.

Botticelli had painted that one ineffably bitter picture of his—"Calumny"

—ten years or so before Savonarola was hanged and burned. Life in Florence under the Medici rule or protection cannot have been a lotus-eater's dream. It was spent by the favoured in beautiful houses and gardens. But the sins committed were great and desperate because the penalties were so great and so appalling. For the orthodox there were the eternal punishments described by Dante; for those who were sceptical in their attitude towards worlds elsewhere, there were unquestionable earthly terrors in the way of poison, the dagger and prisons. Botticelli, in this very picture of which we are speaking, shows us a stately hall of luxurious pleasure. Through the windows we see a perfect sky and

landscape, but, within the palace, we are shown, plainly enough, the ferocity, cruelty and moral weakness. Truth, altogether resembling one of his Venuses, stands apart from the tormentors, their victim, and the judge—the judge, who is neither just nor unjust, but apparently bewildered—another Pilate.

What were the brutal, base and degrading facts which broke in with such ferocity upon the dreamer's mind? What spotted snake entered into that sacred, inaccessible world of poetry and idealism? Well, the spotted snake was, probably, life itself. Every Paradise is always to the outsider a "Fool's Paradise,"—that is nothing, but when the Peri within the gates begins to feel that all is not well *outside*, we have the real disillusion.

This, probably, was what happened to Botticelli. The wickedness of the city and the citizens came nearer and nearer: the brutal and cruel and indecent talk fell louder and louder upon his unwilling ears. The tale-bearers, liars and slanderers and hypocrites cursed and sneered on every side. Just as Dante turned from writing the most sublime love verses ever composed and gave his attention to the mysteries of Hell, so Botticelli, after the death of Savonarola, said good-bye to his Child-Madonnas, his wistful Saints, the innocent Aphrodite, and never more betrayed such visions by pen or pencil.

Botticelli has been called modern and pessimistic—why, I cannot imagine. Joyousness, in the reckless, heedless,

and unthinking sense, was never yet found in the Italian genius at any period. I believe I am right in saying that the joy of living—where it may be said to exist — and the amazing rubbish written on that theme to-day are modern affectations. A creature of reflective mind could neither reflect nor create on joyousness alone. A bland, smiling Madonna could be executed by an irreligious person only —a person indeed of no reverence. When Botticelli, therefore, gave his Madonnas an air, in some cases, of extraordinary suffering, he was not pessimistic, but entirely right. He did not forget the sword in the heart. It is declared again that the Venus of Botticelli is too innocent—that she also wears a faltering, almost depre-

cating smile. Why not? The Mother of gods and men is not the personage who plays such a striking part on the tormented canvases and ill-used marbles of young Europe to-day. Botticelli strikes a note altogether at variance with the robust nihilism of modern art. If he knew life well enough to paint Aphrodite with a note of warning as well as tenderness on her youthful face, if he gave his Angels wonder, and his Saints a gaze of patient but intense longing for a better acquaintance with wisdom, he was certainly not wasting his own time, nor his incomparable gifts, in attempting, toward the close of his days, some illustrations to Dante's *Divina Commedia.*

I want to dwell upon the fact that the

best possible training for artists is the reading of the highest kind of literature, and the best training for writers of every class is the study of the so-called decorative arts. Botticelli, as a boy, was taught to read Dante, and Dante, as a young man, as I have said, had lessons in drawing and music. It has been well said that the mould of his thought and the perfection of his style show the great painter's instinct for colour, effect and arrangement, and the sculptor's sense of proportion. Botticelli, in his imagination, tenderness and dramatic expression, was as much a poet as a painter.

Great art springs from great convictions. Work begun with a note of interrogation in the mind and finished with the sense that little is true, less

worth while or worth doing at all, is essentially weak. There can be no vigour in things so conceived or produced. The old Masters, to a great extent, copied their own surroundings, the people around them—their personages were mostly portraits—not studio models.

It ought to be pointed out that no Catholic artist was ever so profane as to make either statues or pictures for the purposes of worship. It is strange to find a writer of John Ruskin's experience going wrong in this matter. He complains that no Catholic could ever be found regarding the masterpieces of Titian or Michael Angelo or any other with pious feelings. I should think not. They were merely pictures and nothing else, and it was never supposed that they

would be regarded in any other light. On the other hand, John Addington Symonds became impatient because he found little dolls of the Virgin and the Bambino adored, as he inferred, by the common people, and hung about with trophies—silver hearts and so on. This is to confuse affection for a personified idea with idolatry. Now, when the old Masters needed a Saint, they chose some well-known sinner from the best society, feeling, perhaps, that the worldly cachet of respectability was not so important as a strong countenance and the light of individual character. Nowadays the effort seems to be to forget the surroundings and to re-create a new world and a new generation. No one must be recognised. The utmost skill is employed in passing off nonentities for ideals of

beauty and courage. The imaginative effort is thus enormous and unfair. It is absurd to dress out a picturesque ignoramus and present him, for instance, as a possible S. Augustine. The artist brings himself to his task, and, as he sees, thinks, feels and fancies, he must paint. The full mind must, of necessity, compose full pictures, and the modern distinctions drawn between works which are called purely decorative and purely illustrative seem to me particularly tedious. Perhaps most of us know the story of Albrecht Dürer going to a fair and seeing a blue monkey. He hurried home and immediately introduced the animal into a sketch he was preparing of "The Holy Family." This seems to me eminently characteristic of all creative minds. Every blue monkey we meet

must go into the vision. Dante took all his country gave him, whether in legend, or tradition, or history, or in revelation. To him the gods had never gone. The sacred Muses were as real as the Cardinal Virtues. He speaks of Phaeton as impartially as he does of the Archangel Gabriel. Pallas and Mars as well as Saul were sculptured on one of the pavements of Purgatory. The *Paradiso*, itself opens with an appeal to Apollo. My opinion is, that Dante believed fully in Apollo as one of the lesser angels, and the mythological references, which could never be otherwise than pedantic and unnatural in English writers — and which do seem pedantic, certainly, in Milton — were Dante's birthright. No one has ever yet called Dante a Pagan. We hear nothing

about his being a degenerate. We do hear, however, from the lips of Beatrice that he was no saint, and from her silent laughter, to which he makes constant reference, and from the frank surprise of the souls who meet him unpunished in Purgatory, he gives us to understand that his friends, at least, considered him quite human enough to require a good deal of chastening before he was fit to enter Paradise. His frankness on this point is characteristic of Catholicism, which always starts with the assumption that everybody is infinitely capable of doing everything, and, if they are restrained at any point, it is rather by the grace of God than any acute personal merit.

My point here then is this—there is nothing decadent or irreligious in the fact that Botticelli painted Venus and the

Graces as well as the Madonna and the Angels. There was never the least confusion in his mind, or the mind of his nation, between the two. Such morbid and corrupt imaginations are wholly modern, wholly un-Catholic, wholly and essentially un-Italian. There is a life of the flesh and a life of the spirit, and while we are alive we have to represent, as best we may, both lives.

We hear that the reading of Pagan literature made the world more beautiful, more charming, and made the conscience lighter and gayer, greatly at the cost of Paradise. Now, what do people mean when they speak of the Pagan spirit? I will confess that ever since I heard, as a child, of the wicked pagans, who simply would be happy, I have been trying to find their groves of pleasure as opposed

to our vale of tears, and to learn the secret of their deluded joy as some reply to our prophet's scroll of lamentation and woe. It is not in Homer, it is not in Virgil, it is not in the Greek dramatists, it is certainly not in Lucretius. No one could complain of Aristotle's flippancy. Plato could not be described as happy-go-lucky. Ah! but the love poets, Catullus and that crew. I can but say the love poets of every period seem to me a complaining set. I do not read the love poets when I want a frivolous hour, or wish to forget the anxieties of living. To be quite serious, you will all agree with me, I feel sure, when I state that a knowledge of Pagan literature can in no way weaken one's moral strength; on the contrary, it is affirmed by many persons, including bishops, who are almost invariably good

scholars, that no education can be called satisfactory without it.

Pagan literature, therefore, and the study of Ovid does not and cannot alter the facts of human existence. There were gardens and palaces before the time of Medici; there were cunning players of sweet music, and workers of gold and silver and marble and embroideries; there were singers and dancers and learned men. Children, who have never heard of Lorenzo the Magnificent, Platonic Academies and the Renaissance, can tell you about Solomon and all his glory, and what he came to think of things in general. He, too, dipped into Pagan literature, and met in the flesh some very striking Pagan individuals. We hear that he married a few such, not without tribulation.

Now, with every appreciation for the art of Walter Pater, and the enthusiasm of John Addington Symonds, I feel bound to say that both writers have entirely failed to comprehend the Roman Catholic spirit in the Renaissance. This understanding has nothing to do with learning, with documents, with great intellectual gifts. It is a question of feeling. Ruskin himself, to whom the painters and builders of Italy owe an eternal debt of gratitude, was always too evangelical in spirit to understand all he saw. A profoundly religious writer, however, he was never perversely wrong in his reading of the Renaissance movement and its effects on the Italian mind. He felt that the immorality of Florence and Rome was something wholly independent of literature and learning, and what is called

priestcraft. It was the inevitable phenomenon which follows great wealth and prosperity,—the follies worked by those who dread pain and are sick of pleasures. Robert Browning in *The Ring and the Book*, has drawn the one absolutely fair picture of what we may call Roman Catholic feeling at that time. We have had no such picture, in spite of much learning and sympathy and many gifts, since Shakespeare, who caught so sanely, justly, vigorously, the humanity—above all the humanity of those days. The man who could draw the character of Pompilia had missed no lesson which the Renaissance could teach.

Scholars have come from the North and from the East, but in Italy there was, with the scholarship or without it, an instinctive comprehension of the literature we

call classic and sympathy with all it said. It was Italy's own spirit, her own language, her own nature, expressed, it is true, in verse of unequalled perfection and prose which must serve for ever as the model of all written speech, but, while to the learned it was art of the highest kind, to the least cultured it was always national, vital, unchanging.

Dante chooses Virgil for his master and guide, and there are as many references to Ovid as there are to S. Thomas Aquinas and the Fathers. Savonarola called Ovid a fool plainly enough in one of his sermons, and warned his hearers that the study of such writings could lead to no happy result. Ovid, however, lived to call himself a fool. But there is not a touch of Ovid's cynicism in Dante or Botticelli. We can be tolerably certain

that Ovid was read by artists most eagerly for his stories from the old mythology, and, just as the Wagnerian operas with their legends of the Northern gods and goddesses have exercised an extraordinary fascination over Northern Europe, speaking to it of primeval fancies and instincts, so the stories of Greek and Roman mythology must have been, as they still are, particularly attractive to spirits in the South. As a matter of fact, Italy is not Italy without its so-called Paganism. The Anglo-Saxons who visit its churches are so astonished at the active as well contemplative and praying life which they see within, mistake the great simplicity, the absolute familiarity with the Higher Powers, for irreverence. They cannot see that the churches are the courts and palaces of the poor, they leave their

squalid lodgments and go into these splendid mansions, which are the mere earthly symbols of the "houses not made with hands," which they are to look for in Heaven.

And now, in conclusion, I will just bring you back to my starting-point, which is this — that it was neither the revival of learning, nor an interest in Greek, nor the study of Ovid, nor any of these purely accidental things which drove one great man to write the *Divine Comedy* and the other to illustrate it. It was the discipline of life. It was not a disappointment in love, or an uncongenial marriage, or the woes of exile, which made Dante the eternal ambassador of the Italian spirit. It was not, of necessity, the downfall of the Medici, or the burning of Savonarola which drove Botticelli to

thoughts of Heaven and Hell. Ovid, himself, was banished and got himself as cordially disliked as Savonarola. These histories do not depend on the hearing of this or that message, or the reading of this or that book. It is all a matter of human nature, and you may speak of movements, Roman Catholic, Protestant, Renaissance and the like; they are convenient terms for the student. They mark time, as people say. They are like the hour glass, but time goes whether the sand be there or not. Many of the horrors depicted in Botticelli's designs, of which we have been speaking, are now to be seen in Italy. Such things, in many opinions, are better not illustrated. But, in the "Paradiso," the artist had full opportunity for his sweeter gifts, and one must explore the country round Florence in the spring

time to appreciate fully the lovely drawings in the "Paradise." One must see the blossoming trees, the new leaves, the wild flowers. One must look up at the dome of the sky, a real dome there, not the clouded canopy of northern climes. Here, at least, we can meet both Dante and Botticelli, and here forget all that is distressing and perplexing. Dante, after all, in taking leave of us, spoke of the stars. So, too, did Botticelli. These were the last words and the last vision. They both came by such different roads and experiences, by disillusions, distractions, bewildering grief, reactions and doubts to the same Paradise. Let this be our encouragement.

THE END

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